How can you help someone with heat illness?

If a victim's symptoms are severe, get medical help at once. Otherwise, help the victim to gradually cool off with water or non-alcoholic, caffeine-free, drinks. Sugar-containing drinks may do harm since they slow fluid absorption. Other treatments may include cool showers, rest in an air-conditioned place and wearing less clothing.

If the victim shows signs of heat stroke, get the victim into shade, call for emergency medical service and use any means to start cooling, such as immersing in cool water, spraying with a garden hose or fanning vigorously. Continue cooling efforts until the victim's temperature drops to 101-102 F. If emergency personnel have not arrived, call a hospital for advice. Get medical help as soon as possible.

How can you avoid heat stress?

Using common sense to stay cool is the most important protection you have from the ills of hot weather. Taking responsibility to help older people, young children and others who rely on adults for judgment is the most important protection a family or community has for the health of all its members.

In excessive heat, people should drink two-to-five times more than usual amounts of water and non-sugar, non-alcoholic beverages to replace fluids lost in perspiration. They also should wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing during hot weather, and wide-brimmed hats while in the sun.

Sunscreens with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, applied to the skin 30 minutes or more before exposure to the sun can reduce sunburn danger and some skin damage.

Also during hot weather, people should pace themselves by taking frequent breaks and limiting physical activity. If warning signs, such as pounding heart and shortness of breath occur, stop to rest in a cooler place.

Staying in an air-conditioned area is the most efficient way to combat heat. People who lack air conditioning at home may spend the hot hours of the day in air-conditioned public places. Some cities offer air-conditioned heat-relief shelters and many suspend utility cut-offs for people who are unable to afford using their air conditioners.

If no air conditioning is available, fans are helpful. However, health experts advise that if heat and humidity create a heat stress index (see below) level of 100 F or higher, fans may not cool, but instead act as heaters in enclosed areas. If you must use a fan when the humidity is high, you should aim the fan through a window to blow hot air out.

Using a buddy system between co-workers in high-heat-stress jobs can help ensure that no worker's early signs of heat illness go unnoticed. People 65 or older should have a friend or relative check on them or call twice daily during a heat wave. If you know someone who may be isolated and at risk, you should check on that person twice each day. While planning activities, you should choose cooler hours to be outdoors. And before prolonged work or exercise away from the safety of air conditioning, listen to weather forecasts for the area where you will be. Forecasters often predict both the heat and the humidity and give special heat warnings.

Heat Index Chart

Temp \ Humidity	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
80							80	82	83	84	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
85	82	83	84	84	85	86	87	88	90	92	93	94	95	97	98	100	105
88	84	85	87	88	90	91	93	94	95	97	98	100	104	106	110	113	117
90	86	87	88	90	92	94	96	97	98	100	103	106	110	113	116	120	124
92	87	89	91	93	94	96	98	100	102	105	108	111	115	120	124	128	130 +
94	91	92	94	95	97	100	103	105	108	111	115	120	125	130 +			
96	93	95	97	98	101	104	107	109	113	118	123	128	130 +				
98	95	97	99	101	104	107	110	114	118	123	129	130 +					
100	96	98	101	104	107	110	115	120	125	130	130 +						
101	97	100	102	105	108	112	118	123	128	130 +							
102	98	101	104	107	110	116	121	127	130 +								
103	100	103	106	108	113	120	125	130	130 +								
104	101	104	107	110	117	123	128	130 +									
105	102	105	108	112	119	126	130	130 +									

Find the humidity on the top line, draw a line down to the current temperature to find the heat index.

Very Warm 80-90 Hot 90-105 Very Hot 105-130 Extremely Hot 130+